

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:NAVELIOTES

APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER

NSC - GSICK

S/S-O:TMARTIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180137

EXDIS FOR ATHERTON FROM SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, US

SUBJECT: QUERIES ON AMERICAN FIRMS REFITTING EGYPTIAN MIGS

1. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN Q'S AND A'S FROM DEPARTMENT'S NOON BRIEFING IN WHICH DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN STUCK FIRMLY TO "NO COMMENT." WE EXPECT THAT MURREY MARDER WILL HAVE FRONTPAGE STORY IN TOMORROW'S WASHINGTON POST. THERE WILL BE FURTHER PRESS PRESSURE AND PERHAPS CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES. GIVEN PROBLEMS IN RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS, PARTICULARLY FROM THE HILL, WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO STAND WITH "NO COMMENT" GUIDANCE UNTIL YOU RETURN.

2. IF PRESSURE IS HEAVY AT PRESS BRIEFING AUGUST 2 AND SPOKESMAN BELIEVES DESIRABLE TO COUNTER, HE COULD NOTE THAT EGYPTIANS HAVE ASKED ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD
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BE HELPFUL WITH THEIR AIR FORCE MAINTENANCE PROBLEM; AND THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

3. SPOKESMAN WOULD NOT GO BEYOND ABOVE PROPOSED COMMENT AND WOULD NOT RESPOND TO QUESTIONS SUCH AS THOSE RELATING TO ANY CONSULTATIONS WE MIGHT HAVE HAD WITH CONGRESS, ETC. AT BEST THIS WILL BE UNSATISFACTORY, BUT MIGHT GET US

THROUGH THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN
SEPTTEL CONCERNING VELIOTES' CONVERSATION WITH BAR-ON
WHICH INDICATES CLEARLY ISSUE NOT LIKELY TO GO AWAY
SOON.

4. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR URGENT GUIDANCE RE PRESS
AND CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES. CHRISTOPHER

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